

Timeline of Key Events - Paper 2 - The Cold War

Revision Activities - Remembering the chronological order and specific dates of events is an important skill in IBDP History and can help you to organise the flow of events and how they are connected. Study the timeline of key events below, taken from the [IBDP specification](#), to test yourself.

Origins of the Cold War 1943-1949 - Global Spread of the Cold War 1945-1964 -
Reconciliation and Renewed Conflict 1963-1979 - The End of the Cold War

1939	<p>24 August - The Nazi-Soviet Pact is signed between Germany and the USSR. Italy was only informed two days before the Pact. Each pledged to remain neutral in the event of either nation being attacked by a third party. Its secret protocols divided Northern and Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. Poland was divided between the two.</p> <p>1 September - Germany invades Poland at 4.45am, starting the European War with Italy declaring itself a non-belligerent.</p> <p>3 September - Britain and France declare war on Germany.</p>
1940	<p>9 April - German troops invade Denmark and Norway in order to secure Swedish coal and steel supplies.</p> <p>10 May - Germany invades Holland, Belgium and France simultaneously, ending the Phoney War in the West.</p> <p>10 May - Winston Churchill becomes UK Prime Minister after the resignation of Neville Chamberlain.</p>
1941	<p>11 March - The US Lend-Lease Act launched a programme for supplying Britain and other allies with 'surplus' armaments in return for bases. Over \$50 billion in supplies were given, ending any pretense of neutrality.</p> <p>22 June - Operation Barbarossa begins as Germany invades the USSR.</p> <p>14 August - The Atlantic Conference takes place off Newfoundland as Churchill and Roosevelt agree common interests and principles on which to base a future world order in the Atlantic Charter,</p> <p>7 December - Pearl Harbour is attacked. Nomura and Kurusu deliver declaration of war 50 minutes after attack, at 1:50pm. Malaya and Hong Kong also attacked.</p> <p>11 December - Germany and Italy declare war on the USA.</p>
1942	<p>4 June - The Battle of Midway begins as the Imperial Japanese Navy is decisively defeated in its attempt to destroy US aircraft carriers and capture the island of Midway. Aided by cryptographers who were able to determine the date and location of the attack, the US Navy prepared its own ambush in which all four of Japan's large aircraft carriers were destroyed, along with 248 aircraft and 1 heavy cruiser. The defeat marked a turning point in the war as Japan was increasingly unable to replace such large losses in trained men and materiel.</p> <p>7 August - The Guadalcanal Campaign is launched on the island of Guadalcanal by US Marines in an attempt to capture and deny the use of airfields on the islands. Overwhelming the defenders, the Japanese soon reinforced their forces. Over six months, three land battles, seven large naval battles, and continual aerial</p>

	<p>battles were fought in an attritional campaign that ended in February 1943 after Japanese forces decided to pull out, not being able to sustain their losses. Along with the Battle of Midway, it was a key turning point in the Pacific War. Japan had sustained the losses of 38 ships and over 680 aircraft and pilots.</p>
1943	<p>14 January - The Casablanca Conference begins in Morocco between US President Roosevelt and UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Stalin was unable to attend due to the ongoing Battle of Stalingrad. The two leaders agreed upon doctrine of 'unconditional surrender' of the Axis powers, and planned their Second Front against Germany to take place first in Italy, rather than in North-West Europe, believing that this would give the Soviets more time to weaken German forces before the main Allied offensive.</p> <p>2 February - The Battle of Stalingrad ends with the surrender and capture of the German 6th Army, marking a turning point in the war on the Eastern Front.</p> <p>5 July - The Battle of Kursk begins as German forces launch their last offensive on the East Front. It culminated in one of the largest tank battles in history, and the resulting Soviet counter-offensives gave the Red Army the strategic initiative for the rest of the war.</p> <p>3 September - The Allied Invasion of Italy begins, with Southern Italy captured by October. Italy surrenders to Allied forces on 8 September.</p> <p>22 November - The Cairo Conference begins in Egypt between the US, UK, and ROC. The Cairo Declaration was issued on 27 November 1943 stating the Allies' intentions to continue deploying military force until Japan's unconditional surrender. The main clauses of the Cairo Declaration are that the three great allies are fighting this war to restrain and punish the aggression of Japan, they covet no gain for themselves and won't involve themselves in territorial expansion wars after the conflict, "Japan be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914", "all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, including Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China", Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed and that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent".</p> <p>28 November - The Tehran Conference begins between the US, UK, and USSR. It was the first meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin to coordinate their war aims and to deliberate on the post-war world. It was agreed that the Allied Second Front would begin during May 1944, and the USSR would launch an offensive from the East at the same time. They also committed themselves to the independence of Iran and Turkey.</p>
1944	<p>6 June - The Allied Invasion of France on D-Day commences with a combined amphibious landing in Normandy and Southern France. By August, Paris had been liberated.</p> <p>22 June - Operation Bagration begins on the Eastern Front as Soviet forces completely destroy German Army Group Centre, leading to the capture of Warsaw and opening the way to Berlin.</p> <p>9 October - The Percentages Agreement is formed between Soviet premier Joseph Stalin and British prime minister Winston Churchill during the Fourth Moscow Conference on October 1944, about how to divide various European countries into spheres of influence. The agreement was made public by Churchill. The US ambassador Averell Harriman, who was supposed to represent Roosevelt in these meetings, was excluded from this particular discussion.</p>

1945

4 February - [The Yalta Conference](#) commits the USSR to entering the fight against Japan 'in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe is terminated.' In return, Stalin is promised possession of Southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. The Conference also deliberated on the issue of Poland, with Stalin insisting that the USSR keeps land annexed in 1939, along the [Curzon Line](#), with Poland compensated by taking land in the West of Germany. Stalin also promised free elections in Poland despite the [Soviet sponsored provisional government](#) recently installed by him in Polish territories occupied by the Red Army. Despite Allied suspicion, Stalin agreed to reorganise the provisional government on democratic lines, and to sign the Declaration of Liberated Europe, promising to allow free elections and democratic institutions in Europe. In regards to Germany, it was agreed that it would be divided into four occupation zones, [demilitarised](#), and [denazified](#) with war criminals put on trial. Germany would also have to pay reparations to the USSR in the form of forced labour. The Allies also obtained a commitment from Stalin to join the United Nations.

22 March - [The Allied Invasion of Germany](#) begins as Allied forces cross the River Rhine before overrunning Western Germany and Austria.

16 April - [The Battle of Berlin](#) begins as Soviet forces encircle and attack Berlin.

30 April - [Hitler commits suicide](#) in his Führerbunker in Berlin. Grand Admiral [Karl Donitz](#) replaced Hitler as Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Donitz ordered a fighting retreat in the East, hoping to negotiate a surrender with Allied forces rather than the Soviets. This enabled 1.8 million soldiers to avoid capture by the Red Army.

8 May - [The German Instrument of Surrender](#) is signed in Berlin, ending the war in Europe.

27 July - [The Potsdam Conference](#) is held between the US, USSR, and UK. The Potsdam Declaration was issued outlining the terms of Japan's unconditional surrender, otherwise it would face 'prompt and utter destruction'. Japan refused to respond to the ultimatum. At the Conference Truman had warned Stalin that he had a 'powerful new weapon'. The Conference was noted for its frosty relationship between new President Truman and Stalin, with Truman taking a firmer line with Stalin. In Indochina, it was agreed that Vietnam would be temporarily divided at the 16th parallel for the purposes of operational convenience. The Allies reluctantly agreed to recognise the Soviet-backed [Provisional Government in Poland](#), whilst provisionally fixing its western border with Germany at the Oder-Neisse Line. The Allies also issued their statement of aims for the occupation of Germany, calling for demilitarisation, denazification, democratisation, decentralisation, and decartelization. Germany and Austria were both to be divided into four occupation zones as would be Berlin. An [Allied Control Commission](#) would be established to coordinate the four zones. [War reparations](#) to the USSR was fixed at 10% of the industrial capacity of the western zones, to be transferred within 2 years. German war industries were to be destroyed.

6 August - [The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima](#) occurs as the US drops the world's first nuclear bomb on Japan.

8 August - [The USSR declares war](#) on Japan, as promised by Stalin at the Yalta Conference.

9 August - [The Soviet Invasion of Manchuria](#) begins as the USSR renounces its Neutrality Pact with Japan and invaded on three fronts. It was the last major campaign of the Second World War and enabled the USSR to establish

	<p>pro-communist governments in Manchuria and Korea, down to the 38th parallel, capturing Pyongyang on 24 August.</p> <p>15 August - The Surrender of Imperial Japan was announced by Emperor Hirohito in his first radio announcement to the Japanese people.</p> <p>17 August - General Order No. 1 is signed by President Truman. It established with Soviet agreement, that Korea would be temporarily divided along the 38th Parallel, with Japanese forces north of the parallel surrendering to the Soviets, and forces south surrendering to the US.</p> <p>2 September - Japan formally signed the Instrument of Surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo harbour.</p> <p>8 September - US forces land in Korea led by Lieutenant General John R. Hodge who was appointed as military governor of South Korea forming the US Army Military Government in Korea. The military government faced immediate protests from the Korean Independence Movement after the military government immediately outlawed the short-lived provisional People's Republic of Korea led by Lyuh Woon-hyung, which had hoped to reunite the whole country at the end of the war. Lyuh attempted to bridge the divide between the extreme left and right and was assassinated in 1947.</p> <p>24 October - The United Nations intergovernmental organisation is established in San Francisco, drafting the UN Charter. Its first meetings took place in London in January 1946.</p> <p>20 November - The Nuremberg Trials for German war criminals is held. Lasting until 1 October 1946, the Trials prosecuted those who had planned, carried out, or participated in the Holocaust and other war crimes. The Trials were given the task of trying 24 of the most important political and military leaders of the Third Reich – though the proceedings of Martin Bormann was tried in absentia, while another, Robert Ley, committed suicide within a week of the trial's commencement. Not included were Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, and Joseph Goebbels, all of whom had committed suicide in the spring of 1945, well before the indictment was signed. Reinhard Heydrich was not included, as he had been assassinated in 1942.</p> <p>27 December - The Moscow Conference of foreign ministers of the US, USSR, and UK issues a joint communique, calling for the establishment of a Joint Commission to make recommendations for a single free government in Korea. It called for four-power trusteeship of Korea for five years before independence could be achieved.</p>
1946	<p>30 January - The Iranian Crisis comes to a head as the United Nations passes Resolution 2 calling for the USSR to withdraw its troops from Northern Iran, something which it had refused to do. This conflict was one of the first episodes of the Cold War outside Europe, and was a factor in the evolving and increasingly contentious political relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, which followed their joint victory in World War II.</p> <p>8 February - The Provisional People's Committee for North Korea is established by the USSR based in Pyongyang. Kim Il-sung was appointed as Chairman. Kim was also chairman of the Korean Communist Party. To solidify his control, Kim established the Korean People's Army which was armed by the USSR.</p> <p>22 February - Kennan's Long Telegram is received in Washington. George F. Kennan was Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Moscow. His telegram outlined his opinions to Washington on Soviet foreign policy. He stated that the</p>

	<p>Soviet world view came from a 'traditional Russian sense of insecurity', believing itself to be perpetually at war with the capitalist world, and that it would seek to expand Marxist influence across the world. He believed that only strength could deter the USSR, believing it was 'highly sensitive to the logic of force.' Kennan called for a policy of containment. Kennan's ideas were developed upon by the Clifford-Elsey Report to President Truman which advocated the 'restraining and confining' of Soviet influence. Kennan later published his ideas under the pseudonym, Mr. X, in his article 'Sources on Soviet Conduct', published in Foreign Affairs journal.</p> <p>5 March - Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech is given at Fulton College, Missouri. Entitled 'The Sinews of Peace', the speech coined the term 'iron curtain' to describe the Soviet-domination of Eastern Europe. The speech was one of the first public attacks by the Allies on the USSR, with Churchill calling for greater Anglo-American cooperation in order to counter the 'indefinite expansion' of Soviet power.</p> <p>20 July - The Second Chinese Civil War begins as Chiang Kai-shek launches an assault on Communist territory across the country. The fighting was most intense in Manchuria where CCP troops had been handed Japanese equipment by the Soviets. By this time, CCP forces had grown to over 1.2 million troops with a militia of over 2 million. The war started with the PLA giving up territory to encourage the GMD to become overextended. Even Yan'an was abandoned in March 1947.</p> <p>7 August - The Turkish Straits Crisis escalates as Soviet warships put pressure on Turkey to relinquish control of shipping through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits. The USSR was keen to gain control of the straits as they provided access to the Mediterranean for the Soviet Black Seas navy. In response to a request for aid from Turkey, the US sent a naval task force to Turkey, pressuring the USSR to withdraw its demands in October. The impact of the crisis persuaded Turkey to abandon its policy of neutrality and to accept \$100 million in economic and defense aid from the US in 1947 under the Truman Doctrine plan. Turkey would later join NATO in 1952.</p> <p>19 December - The First Indochina War commences as fighting breaks out between French Colonial Forces and the Viet Minh, led by Ho Chi Minh. After WW2, Ho Chi Minh had proclaimed the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) on 2 September. However on 23 September French forces returned to Vietnam and overthrew the DRV government, declaring French authority restored. Guerrilla Warfare soon erupted, culminating in the French defeat at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954. The Geneva Conference on 20 July 1954 gave the Viet Minh control of North Vietnam above 17th parallel. The south continued under Emperor Bao Dai, who was deposed in 1955 by his prime minister, Ngo Dinh Diem, creating the Republic of Vietnam. Soon, an insurgency developed against Diem, backed by the North, which would escalate into the Vietnam War.</p>
1947	<p>1 January - Bizonia is created in Germany as the US and Britain unite their zones of control in order to advance economic growth and the recovery of Germany. The decision to unite the two zones was made after US policy towards Europe changed in 1946, fearing that communism would spread in conditions of economic hardship. The turning point began with Secretary of State James Byrnes Speech of Hope in Stuttgart on 6 September 1946 where in opposition to the Morgenthau Plan, he announced the US' support for economic reconstruction as the best bastion</p>

	<p>against communism, stating, "There is no choice between being a communist on 1,500 calories a day and a believer in democracy on a thousand". The creation of Bizone led to further divisions within the Allied Control Commission, with the Soviets fearing a economically strong Germany.</p> <p>1 February - The Marshal Mission to China ends with the US stopping all military aid to the GMD, effectively abandoning the GMD to their fate.</p> <p>1 February - The Reverse Course begins in Japan as Allied Occupation policies start to oppose the growing expansion of leftist parties and trade union militancy.</p> <p>12 March - The Truman Doctrine is formally announced, marking an escalation of the Cold War. The doctrine announced that the US should support free peoples across the world who are facing threats from outside pressures and economic and financial aid should be provided. The doctrine was formulated due to increasing Soviet involvement in Turkey and Greece. Both countries had appealed to the US for aid against communist insurrection, and in the case of Greece, a communist victory in its civil war seemed likely. Truman argued that if Greece and Turkey did not receive the aid that they urgently needed, they would inevitably fall to communism with grave consequences throughout the region. The policy won the support of Republicans who controlled Congress and involved sending \$400 million in American money but no military forces to the region. The effect was to end the communist threat, and in 1952, both Greece and Turkey joined NATO, a military alliance, to guarantee their protection. The Truman Doctrine was informally extended to become the basis of American Cold War policy throughout Europe and around the world. It shifted American foreign policy toward the Soviet Union from détente (a relaxation of tension) to a policy of containment of Soviet expansion as advocated by diplomat George Kennan. It was distinguished from rollback by implicitly tolerating the previous Soviet takeovers in Eastern Europe.</p> <p>5 June - The Marshall Plan is announced by Secretary of State George C. Marshall at an address at Harvard University. The Plan was in response to the failure of talks with the USSR over the redevelopment of the German economy. Effective from 3 June 1948, the European Recovery Programme (ERP) was an initiative to aid Western Europe to rebuild economies after the war. Giving over \$13 billion, the ERP focus primarily on rebuilding the industrial base of Western Europe, with the UK receiving the most funds (26%) followed by France (18%) and West Germany (11%). Recipient nations had to join the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). It was believed that a prosperous Europe would be the best defense against communist influence. Although the ERP was offered to states within the Soviet Bloc, including the USSR, Stalin dismissed the plan as 'dollar imperialism' and refused to allow Eastern Bloc nations to accept it. Instead, the USSR developed the Molotov Plan which later expanded into COMECON.</p> <p>14 November - The UN passes a resolution calling for free elections in Korea and the withdrawal of foreign troops. It was brought to the UN after the failure of the US-Soviet Joint Commission to decide on what to do with Korea. The resolution called for the creation of the UN Temporary Commission on Korea to supervise elections. The USSR decided to boycott the commission, and the controversial decision was to hold elections only in the South of Korea.</p>
1948	<p>21 February - The Czechoslovak Coup begins as the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, with Soviet backing, assumed undisputed control over the government of Czechoslovakia, marking the onset of four decades of communist rule in the country. The event alarmed Western countries and helped spur quick</p>

	<p>adoption of the Marshall Plan, the creation of a state in West Germany, vigorous measures to keep communists out of power in France and especially Italy, and steps toward mutual security that would, in little over a year, result in the establishment of NATO.</p> <p>17 March - The Treaty of Brussels is signed between Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Britain. The Treaty was intended to create a purely European mutual defense pact in the face of the communist threat and fears over a resurgent Germany. In 1948 it created a military agency known as the Western Union Defense Organisation to improve security cooperation and was a precursor to the later development of NATO.</p> <p>10 May - The South Korean Constitutional Assembly Elections are held in the South under UN supervision. It was won by the National Association for the Rapid Realisation of Korean Independence, led by Syngman Rhee.</p> <p>2 June - The London 6-Power Conference ends with agreement between the Western Allies on the possible creation of a democratic West Germany. In response to the Conference and Western plans to create an independent German state, the USSR ended its involvement with the Allied Control Council.</p> <p>20 June - The Deutsche Mark is introduced as a new currency for the Western zones of control in Germany as part of Allied attempts to rebuild an independent German state. The Soviets saw the introduction of the Deutsche Mark as a threat to their economic model, as Soviet policy was to keep Germany economically weak and opposed attempts at strengthening the Allied zones of control. This led directly to Stalin's decision to launch the Berlin Blockade.</p> <p>24 June - The Berlin Blockade begins in Berlin as the Soviet Union blocked the Western Allies' railway, road, and canal access to the sectors of Berlin under Western control. The Soviets offered to drop the blockade if the Western Allies withdrew the newly introduced Deutsche mark from West Berlin. In response, the Western Allies organized the Berlin airlift (26 June 1948 – 30 September 1949) to carry supplies to the people of West Berlin. The Soviets did not disrupt the airlift for fear this might lead to open conflict. On 12 May 1949, the USSR lifted the blockade of West Berlin. The Berlin Blockade served to highlight the competing ideological and economic visions for postwar Europe.</p> <p>15 August - The Republic of Korea is established formally taking over power from the US military, with Syngman Rhee as first President.</p> <p>9 September - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is established in North Korea led by Kim Il-sung as prime minister. Soviets forces then withdrew from North Korea, yet Kim Il-sung would later successfully lobby Stalin and Mao into supporting his aim of uniting the two Koreas under socialism.</p> <p>12 December - The UN General Assembly accepts the report of UNTCOK and declares the Republic of Korea to be the 'only lawful government of Korea'. This antagonised the DPRK and USSR, increasing hostilities between the DPRK and ROK. The USSR had previously declared the DPRK to be sovereign over Korea.</p>
1949	<p>5 January - The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) is established under the leadership of the USSR. Stalin was concerned about the Marshall Plan and Comecon was meant to prevent countries in the Soviets' sphere of influence from moving towards that of the Americans.</p> <p>4 April - The North Atlantic Treaty is signed forming NATO. Its members included the five Treaty of Brussels states plus the US, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. Its stated goals according to its first Secretary General was</p>

	<p>'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.' NATO was designed as collective defense organisation whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party. It was developed in direct response to the threat of communism, increased by the Czech Coup and Berlin Blockade of 1948.</p> <p>23 May - The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is formed from the merger of the French, British and American occupation zones. Until the 1970s, the FRG considered itself to be the only legitimate German state, claiming a mandate over all of Germany and refusing to recognise the GDR. Its first Chancellor was Konrad Adenauer.</p> <p>1 August - The Department of State's China White Paper is published. Published during the height of Mao Zedong's takeover, the 1,054 page document argued that American intervention in China was doomed to failure. Although Acheson and Truman had hoped that the study would dispel rumors and conjecture, the paper helped to convince many critics that the administration had indeed failed to check the spread of communism in China.</p> <p>29 August - The First Soviet Nuclear Weapon Test occurs, making the USSR the world's second nuclear power. The Test was a turning point in the Cold War, escalating the race to develop the Hydrogen Bomb. The test surprised the Western powers as American intelligence had estimated that the Soviets would not produce an atomic weapon until 1953, while the British did not expect it until 1954. It contributed to the growing Red Scare in the West, leading to high profile spying cases.</p> <p>1 October - The People's Republic of China (PRC) is declared by Mao Zedong in Beijing, effectively ending the Civil War but for a few isolated pockets of resistance. The Civil War was one of the costliest military campaigns of the 20th century, with 3 million GMD and 1 million PLA losses. Over 6 million civilian deaths were attributed to the war.</p> <p>7 October - The German Democratic Republic (GDR) is formed by the USSR in its former zone of control in East Germany. The government of the GDR was turned over to the Socialist Unity Party (SED) led by Wilhelm Pieck. The GDR became a one-party satellite state under the control of the USSR, implementing a series of communist reforms.</p> <p>7 December - The Nationalist Government of the GMD and Chiang Kai-shek flees to Taiwan, taking what remained of China's \$300 million foreign currency reserves and national treasures, as well as 2 million troops, supporters and government staff.</p>
1950	<p>12 January - Secretary of State Dean Acheson's Perimeter Speech is given to the National Press Club, outlining US military policy in the Pacific. Acheson's speech famously did not mention the Korean Peninsula as part of the all-important "defense perimeter" of the United States. Since the war in Korea broke out on June 25, just a few months later, critics, especially in South Korea, took Acheson's statements to mean that the United States support for the new Syngman Rhee government in South Korea would be limited and that the speech provided Joseph Stalin and Kim Il-sung with a "green light" to believe the US would not intervene if they invaded the South.</p> <p>14 February - The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance is signed by Mao and Stalin. It provided China with a Soviet loan of \$300 million and access to 20,000 Soviet experts who were sent to help China</p>

	<p>industrialise and rebuild. Over 80,000 CCP cadres were sent to Moscow to study. Yet the loan was conditional and had to be paid back with interest.</p> <p>14 April - National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) is released and became one of the most important statements of American policy in the Cold War. NSC-68 and its subsequent amplifications advocated a large expansion in the military budget of the United States, the development of a hydrogen bomb, and increased military aid to allies of the United States. It made the containment of global Communist expansion a high priority. NSC-68 rejected the alternative policies of friendly détente and rollback against the Soviet Union.</p> <p>25 June - The Korean War begins as Communist North Korea launches a surprise invasion of US backed South Korea. The invasion forced President Truman to reconsider his willingness to abandon Taiwan, sending the US 7th Fleet to patrol the waters of the Taiwan Strait to prevent any potential PLA attack.</p> <p>7 October - UN forces in Korea cross over the 38th parallel into North Korea. The next day, Mao Zedong ordered PLA soldiers of the North East Frontier Force to assembly on the Yalu River, ready to cross.</p> <p>25 October - The Chinese Assault on UN Forces begins as over 270,000 soldiers of the PVA led by Peng Dehuai begin to attack UN forces, catching them by surprise and forcing the retreat of the US Eighth Army. The invasion was accompanied by the 'Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea' mass campaign within China. This was a social movement designed to persuade the masses to support war in Korea by means of mass propaganda. It also targeted all foreigners, forcing many churches and foreign businesses to close. By 4 January Seoul had been recaptured but PVA forces were severely overextended. Counter-attacks were launched by UN forces, commanded by General Matthew Ridgway after Douglas MacArthur was forced to resign on 11 April 1951 due to policy disagreements with President Truman. By June 1951, a stalemate had been reached as the front stabilised along the 38th parallel, where it would remain until the ceasefire on 27 July 1953. The war hit the Chinese economy hard with up to 55% of GDP being spent on the military.</p>
1951	<p>8 September - The Treaty of San Francisco is signed between 48 nations and Japan, ending Japan's position as imperial power and returning sovereignty to Japan, ending the Allied occupation.</p> <p>8 September - The US-Japan Security Treaty is signed giving the US the right to station troops in Japan, and to prohibit Japan from providing foreign powers with military related rights without the permission of the US.</p>
1952	<p>23 July - The Egyptian Revolution begins as the Free Officers Movement led by Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew the Western-backed monarchy of King Faruq, turning Egypt into a republic. By 1954, Nasser had become the undisputed leader of Egypt, instituting socialist reforms and a one-party state. His revolutionary government adopted a staunchly nationalist, anti-imperialist agenda, which came to be expressed chiefly through Arab nationalism, and international non-alignment. This brought him into conflict with Britain, France and Israel, leading to a close relationship with the USSR that worried the US, leading to the Eisenhower Doctrine.</p> <p>3 October - The United Kingdom becomes the third nation in the world to develop a nuclear weapon. Developed in Operation Hurricane, the plutonium implosion device was tested in the Monte Bello Islands, Australia. Since the 1958 US-UK</p>

	<p>Mutual Defence Agreement, the UK has relied on the US for its nuclear technology, giving the US an effective veto over the UK's atomic capability.</p>
1953	<p>1 January - The First Five-Year Plan is announced by Mao that rapidly industrialised China following the Soviet economy model. Running until 1957, the Plan set ambitious goals for industry, concentrating on heavy industry, and also attempted to collectivise agriculture.</p> <p>20 January - Dwight D. Eisenhower becomes 34th President of the USA, serving for two terms until 20 January 1961. Eisenhower continued Truman's policy of Containment, but his New Look foreign policy focused on reducing the costs of conventional forces after the Korean War by relying on the nuclear threat of massive retaliation which he used in the 1954 and 1958 Taiwan Strait Crises. He also oversaw a more assertive containment posture, ordering coups in Iran and Guatemala, and aiding the French and the South Vietnamese government in Vietnam. His 1957 Eisenhower Doctrine, in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis, attempted to extend US influence in the Middle East in order to combat the threat that international communism posed to regimes in the region, ordering intervention in Lebanon in 1958. His 1955 Formosa Resolution also extended US security guarantees to Taiwan. Domestically, Eisenhower helped to end McCarthyism by covertly opposing Senator McCarthy. After 1957, he established NASA and increased funding for science research and education. In his farewell address of 1961, he warned the country of the dangers of massive military spending and the influence it gave to big business, coining the term military-industrial complex.</p> <p>5 March - The Death of Stalin occurs in Moscow after suffering a stroke. After his body was visited by 1.5 million people, it was embalmed and laid to rest in Lenin's Mausoleum, being removed in 1961 and buried in the Kremlin Wall Necropolis as part of de-Stalinisation. A power struggle soon emerged between the leading members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU. By 1958, Nikita Khrushchev had emerged as the leading candidate.</p> <p>16 June - The East German Uprising begins as a strike by construction workers turns into widespread protests against the GDR government. The protests were in response to increasingly severe working and living conditions, with taxation and prices increasing in order to fund industrialisation and collectivisation. The uprising in East Berlin was violently suppressed by tanks of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany and the Volkspolizei, with over 500 deaths and over 5,000 arrests.</p> <p>27 July - The Korean Armistice Agreement is signed at Panmunjom between the US, DPRK, and the People's Volunteer Army of China. It called for the cessation of all hostilities until a final peaceful settlement is achieved, something which is yet to happen. Korean remains divided with a demilitarised zone at the 38th parallel. In total, the PVA suffered over 390,000 casualties. An estimated 2.5 million civilians were killed in the war, with the economies of both sides ruined. The war was seen as a huge propaganda victory in China, helping to consolidate Mao's position. Yet it also led to a growing conflict with the USSR over the lack of support China received. It also hardened Cold War attitudes, with the US committing itself to a policy of containment in Asia, signing a Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROK on 1 October, and committing itself to protecting Taiwan.</p> <p>15 August - The Iranian Coup occurs as the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh is overthrown in a CIA-backed coup, strengthening the monarchical rule of Mohammad Reza Shah who implemented a pro-Western reforms. Mossaddegh had sought to audit the documents of the Anglo-Iranian Oil</p>

	<p>Company (AIOC), a British corporation (now part of BP) and to limit the company's control over Iranian petroleum reserves. Upon the refusal of the AIOC to co-operate with the Iranian government, the parliament (Majlis) voted to nationalise Iran's oil industry and to expel foreign corporate representatives from the country. It is in response to this that the CIA acted.</p>
1954	<p>7 May - The Battle of Dien Bien Phu ends in French defeat leading to the end of French power in Indochina and the signing of the Geneva Accords in July 1955.</p> <p>18 June - The Guatemalan Coup occurs as the CIA arms rebel groups to overthrow the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz. Arbenz had ruled Guatemala since 1951 and had instituted a series of popular land reforms, granting property to landless peasants. This encroached on the power of the American United Fruit Company (UFC), whose neocolonial business and land holdings in Guatemala had been affected by the reform policies. Under heavy lobbying by the UFC, first Truman and then Eisenhower had given to go-head for a coup. After extensive psychological warfare and arming rebels, Arbenz was forced to resign, with the CIA-backed Castillo Armas becoming President. Armas quickly assumed dictatorial powers, banning opposition parties, reversing social reforms and torturing political opponents. The coup contributed to long-lasting anti-U.S. sentiment in Latin America and led to nearly four decades of civil war.</p> <p>1 July - The Japan Self-Defense Force is established to strengthen Japan's military forces after the Korean War and enabled US forces to be redeployed elsewhere.</p> <p>3 September - The First Taiwan Strait Crisis begins as PLA troops start shelling the ROC islands of Quemoy and Matsu. The conflict ended on 1 May 1955 after the US threatened the possibility of massive nuclear retaliation, with the USSR failing to declare its support for the PRC.</p> <p>8 September - The Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) is formed by the US as a collective defense organisation in Manila. Influenced by the US policy of containment, it was designed to prevent further communist gains in SE Asia after the Korean War but is generally considered a failure because internal conflict and dispute hindered general use of the SEATO military; however, SEATO-funded cultural and educational programs left long-standing effects in Southeast Asia. Its members included the US, Australia, New Zealand, France, Pakistan, The Philippines, Thailand and the UK. SEATO was dissolved on 30 June 1977 after many members lost interest and withdrew.</p> <p>2 December - The Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty is signed between the ROC and US, discouraging the PRC from attacking Taiwan.</p>
1955	<p>29 January - The Formosa Resolution is passed in the US, committing the US to protect Taiwan. It gave the President the power to intervene if the island was attacked, further discouraging PRC aggression.</p> <p>18 April - The Bandung Conference takes place in Indonesia as a meeting of newly independent Asian and African nations, marking a key milestone in the development of the Non-Aligned Movement. The conference adopted a "declaration on promotion of world peace and cooperation", which included Nehru's five principles, and a collective pledge to remain neutral in the Cold War.</p> <p>9 May - West Germany joins NATO as Western allies feared that without German manpower, they couldn't resist a potential Soviet invasion. The move led immediately to the formation of the Warsaw Pact.</p>

	<p>14 May - The Warsaw Pact is established by the USSR in response to West Germany joining NATO. The Pact was a collective defense treaty amongst Soviet satellite states and the USSR and was designed as a counterweight to NATO. The USSR and other states like Poland had feared a re-militarised Germany, with Stalin even going so far to propose and reunified and neutral Germany in 1952. This was seen as a bluff by NATO, who feared a neutral Germany would be easily subverted into the Soviet orbit. The Warsaw Pact would continue to unite the militaries of the Soviet Bloc until its dissolution in February 1991.</p> <p>15 May - The Austrian State Treaty is signed between Austria and the Allied occupation powers (France, UK, US, USSR), re-establishing Austrian sovereignty. The Treaty is considered an expression of improving relations in the Cold War after the death of Stalin and a rare example of agreement. The former Allies all agreed on Austrian neutrality, easing tensions in central Europe.</p> <p>18 July - The Geneva Summit takes place between the US, UK, USSR, and France. The purpose was to bring together world leaders to begin discussions on peace. The most significant proposal made by President Eisenhower was his "Open Skies" plan, which called for an international aerial monitoring system. Khrushchev refused the plan. Instead he proposed the removal of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, to be replaced by a new system of collective security, even suggesting that the USSR should join NATO, this being refused by the US. The conference achieved little but did mark an era of renewed optimism in cold war relationships, however this was disrupted later by the Suez Crisis</p> <p>20 July - The Geneva Accords are signed on the future of Indochina at the Geneva Conference. A ceasefire was signed between France and the North Vietnam, with France agreeing to withdraw troops from the region. Indochina was split into Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, with Vietnam temporarily divided along the 17th parallel until elections could be held to unite the country. The US refused to sign the Accords, and elections were never held due to refusals by Ngo Dinh Diem, who rather unilaterally declared the Republic of Vietnam in South Vietnam.</p>
1956	<p>25 February - Nikita Khrushchev delivers his 'secret speech', On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences, to a closed session during the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The speech was sharply critical of Stalin's reign and criticised the cult of personality that had developed around Stalin. The speech ushered in a period of relaxation in the Cold War known as the Khrushchev Thaw, however it contributed to the growing Sino-Soviet Split as Mao consider the speech as an implicit attack on his rule. Mao Zedong and Enver Hoxha of Albania condemned Khrushchev as a revisionist, in response forming the anti-revisionist movement which criticised the USSR for deviating from world revolution and the path of Lenin and Stalin.</p> <p>June 28 - The Poznan Uprising occurs in Poland as workers demonstrated against the government of the People's Republic of Poland. A crowd of approximately 100,000 gathered in the city center near the local Ministry of Public Security building. About 400 tanks and 10,000 soldiers of the People's Army of Poland and the Internal Security Corps under Polish-Soviet general Stanislav Poplavsky were ordered to suppress the demonstration and during the pacification fired at the protesting civilians. The death toll was placed at over 100 people. The Poznań protests were an important milestone on the way to the installation of a less Soviet-controlled government in Poland in October, with the moderate Wladyslaw Gomulka appointed as First Secretary.</p>

	<p>23 October - The Hungarian Revolution occurs as a nationwide revolt breaks out against the repressive government of the Hungarian People's Republic and Soviet-imposed policies, led by Matyas Rakosi. It was the first major threat to Soviet domination in Europe and was sparked by Khrushchev's Secret Speech in February, interpreted by many as legitimising protest and reform. Forcing the resignation of Rakosi, moderate communists appointed Imre Nagy as Party Chairman. Nagy responded to protests by initiating democratic reforms and 1 November, announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, declaring Hungary to be a neutral state. This was a step too far and on 4 November, Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces invaded Hungary to put down the protests. Over 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed in the fighting, and a further 200,000 Hungarian citizens fled as refugees. Nagy was arrested and executed. The revolution consolidated Soviet control over Hungary, appointing the hardline Janos Kadar. But the revolution led to worldwide protests against the USSR, leading to a split amongst Western Marxists over the use of force, leading to a decline in support for Western communist parties.</p> <p>29 October - The Suez Crisis occurs as Egypt is invaded by Israel, UK, and France. The invasion was planned by the three nations in response to Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. Under heavy US pressure and the threat of rocket attacks from the USSR, the UK was forced to abandon the invasion, marking an end to its role as an independent world power. The US feared that support for the invasion would unite Arab nationalists with the Soviet Union. The crisis undermined Western attempts to oppose the Soviet response to the Hungarian Revolution, which was seen as a propaganda victory for the USSR.</p>
1957	<p>5 January - The Eisenhower Doctrine is announced which extended US support for pro-Western regimes in the Middle East by authorising the use of military force if requested and setting aside \$200 million for military aid.</p> <p>4 October - Sputnik 1 is launched by the USSR, becoming the world's first artificial Earth satellite. This surprise success precipitated the American Sputnik crisis and triggered the Space Race, a part of the larger Cold War.</p> <p>18 November - The Moscow Conference of World Communists Parties meets to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Revolution. Mao attended the conference, giving a series of speeches warning Moscow to abandon 'revisionism'. Deng Xiaoping also attacked Khrushchev's policies of 'peaceful co-existence', claiming that world revolution was only possible through armed struggle. Khrushchev responded by calling the Great Leap Forward 'harebrained'.</p>
1958	<p>1 January - The Great Leap Forward is announced by Mao in Nanjing. As the Second Five-Year Plan for the development of the economy, the GLF sought to harness China's huge population to drive forward industrialisation and collectivisation. Ideologically, the GLF marked a change from the Soviet model of bureaucratic, careful planned, and centrally controlled growth and lead to antagonism between China and the USSR.</p> <p>15 July - The Lebanon Crisis occurs as under the Eisenhower Doctrine, the US sends over 15,000 troops to Lebanon the prop-up the pro-Western government of President Camile Chamoun.</p> <p>31 July - Khrushchev's First visit to Beijing occurs to meet with Mao. The meeting went badly, with both sides disagreeing about international Communist cooperation. Khrushchev sought to persuade Mao to give up China's nuclear weapons programme and to adopt a two-china policy over Taiwan to avoid</p>

	<p>tensions with the US. Mao resented Khrushchev's patronising tone, worsening relations between the two nations further.</p> <p>23 August - The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis occurs as PRC forces resumed shelling the islands of Quemoy and Matsu without first notifying the USSR. The US quickly reinforced ROC forces in the area. Mao used the crisis as a way of mobilising the masses behind his domestic policies in China, whilst strengthening his contested position with the USSR as leader of the worldwide communist movement against Western imperialism. The USSR refused to even morally-back the PRC, worsening the growing split between the two nations.</p> <p>10 November - The Berlin Crisis begins as Khrushchev delivers an ultimatum to the Western Allies to withdraw from Berlin within six months and make it a free, demilitarised city, calling Berlin 'a malignant tumor'. Otherwise, the USSR would conclude a separate peace treaty with the GDR and turn over control of access rights to them, which would block Allied access to the city. Khrushchev had felt confident enough to escalate tensions over Berlin due to the ongoing concern of the GDR over the brain drain and the perceived Soviet advantage in missile technology known as the Missile Gap. Since the launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957, many in the West feared a Soviet superiority in ICBMs, giving Khrushchev a credible bargaining position over Berlin.</p>
1959	<p>1 January - The Cuban Revolution takes place as Fidel Castro's 26 July Movement wins in an armed revolt against the US-backed government of President Fulgencio Batista. Castro enacted a socialist state that nationalised all US interests on the island, reforming along increasingly communist lines. The Cuban Revolution had powerful domestic and international repercussions, leading to US attempts to overthrow the Castro government with an embargo in 1960 and the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion. This failed and served to cement a relationship between Castro and the USSR, leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963.</p> <p>1 March - The Second Indochina War begins as Ho Chi Minh declares a People's War on South Vietnam in order to unite the country. This escalated the insurgency in South Vietnam, leading to the North Vietnamese Invasion of Laos in July and the creation of the National Liberation Front (Vietcong) in South Vietnam in December 1960. By 1961, the US began to increase its military aid to the government of South Vietnam who struggle to contain the insurgency, with over 16,000 American military advisors in the South by November 1963.</p> <p>15 September - The Camp David Summit begins as Khrushchev meets with Eisenhower in the US, the first Soviet leader to do so. Khrushchev's U.S. visit resulted in an informal agreement with U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower that there would be no firm deadline over Berlin, but that there would be a four-power summit to try to resolve the issue to take place in Paris in 1960, and the premier left the U.S. to general good feelings.</p> <p>2 October - Khrushchev's Second and Final Visit to Beijing takes place in an attempt to repair relations between the two, yet the visit only served to increase tension between the two leaders.</p>
1960	<p>13 February - The French Atomic Bomb is developing making France the fourth atomic power in the world. The bomb was developed under the government of Charles de Gaulle, who formed an increasingly independent foreign policy, distancing itself from NATO.</p> <p>1 May - The U-2 Incident occurs as the USSR shoots down a US spy plane over Soviet territory, with its pilot, Gary Powers, captured alive. Believing Powers to</p>

	<p>have been killed, the U.S. announced that a weather plane had been lost near the Turkish-Soviet border. The Incident turned into a political disaster when Eisenhower admitted that the U-2 flight had been sanctioned and was a 'distasteful necessity'. The fallout from the incident led to the Soviet walkout at the Paris Summit.</p> <p>16 May - The Paris Four-Power Summit is held with the aim of negotiating over the Berlin Crisis. At the beginning of the talks, there was still hope that the two sides could come together even after the events of the U-2 incident, but Eisenhower refused to apologize and Khrushchev left the summit one day after it had begun.</p> <p>5 July - The Congo Crisis commences as civil war breaks out between rival groups to claim power after independence from Belgium. Tensions escalated after the USSR sent military advisors to support Patrice Lumumba, yet by 1965 he had been defeated by Western-backed Joseph-Désiré Mobutu. Under Mobutu's rule, the Congo (renamed Zaire in 1971) was transformed into a dictatorship which would endure until his deposition in 1997. The turmoil of the Congo Crisis destabilised Central Africa and helped to ignite the Portuguese Colonial War, especially the war of independence in neighbouring Angola.</p> <p>1 August - The USSR withdraws Soviet scientific and technical advisors and aid from China, leading to the closure of 300 industrial plants and projects, increasing the Sino-Soviet Split.</p>
1961	<p>20 January - John Fitzgerald Kennedy becomes 35th President of the USA until his assassination in November 1963. The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the establishment of the Peace Corps, developments in the Space Race, the building of the Berlin Wall, the Trade Expansion Act to lower tariffs, and the Civil Rights Movement all took place during his presidency.</p> <p>1 February - China and Albania become allies against the USSR after China steps up financial support for Albania after the USSR cut financial support due to Albania's continued opposition to Soviet policies. This was a clear sign of the worsening Sino-Soviet Split in World Communism.</p> <p>17 April - The Bay of Pigs Invasion commences in Cuba in a CIA-backed operation to overthrow the increasingly communist government of Fidel Castro. Launched from Guatemala and Nicaragua, the invading force was defeated within three days by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, under the direct command of Prime Minister Fidel Castro. The invasion was a major failure for US foreign policy and helped to strengthen the position of Castro's leadership, made him a national hero, also strengthening the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union. This eventually led to the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.</p> <p>4 June - The Vienna Summit commences between new US President John F. Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev. The Berlin Question—whether or not the U.S. would allow the USSR to sign a separate peace treaty with Berlin—dominated debates at the Vienna Summit. The signing of a separate peace treaty with Berlin did not appeal to American policy makers. A peace treaty threatened the established balance of power and could potentially lead to the United States losing all its influence in East Berlin. The Summit ended with Kennedy refusing to accept Khrushchev's ultimatum that he would go ahead with a separate peace treaty unless the US signed an interim arrangement on Berlin by 31 December. In summary, the Summit did little to solve the Berlin Crisis, only serving to re-confirm established positions.</p>

	<p>25 July - President Kennedy publicly announces an increase of \$3.25 billion in the defence budget, an extra 200,000 troops, and a tripling in size of the draft and army reserves, hoping that the increase would show Khrushchev that the US meant what they said over Berlin and deter Khrushchev from further ultimatums. Kennedy finished by stating that an attack on West Berlin would be taken as an attack on the U.S. Over 20,000 people fled into West Berlin as tensions escalated, further putting pressure on Walter Ulbricht and Khrushchev to act to stop the brain drain.</p> <p>13 August - The Berlin Wall begins construction in East Berlin, having been ordered by Walter Ulbricht the day before. East German troops and workers had begun to tear up streets running alongside the barrier to make them impassable to most vehicles, and to install barbed wire entanglements and fences along the 156 km (97 mi) around the three western sectors and the 43 km (27 mi) which actually divided West and East Berlin. Approximately 32,000 combat and engineer troops were employed for the building of the Wall, after which the Border Police became responsible for manning and improving it. To discourage Western interference and perhaps control potential riots, the Soviet Army was present. The sealing of the Berlin border immediately escalated tensions between the superpowers, leading to a stand-off of tanks at Checkpoint Charlie on 27 October. Eventually, both sides backed down. The construction of the wall actually worked to ease tension in Berlin and was the last major politico-military incident over Berlin. Kennedy later stated concerning the Wall: "It's not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war."</p> <p>17 October - Zhou Enlai walks out of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in Moscow after Khrushchev attacked Albania for its Stalinist policies, ending diplomatic relations between the PRC and USSR. A war of words soon began between the two nations, with Khrushchev calling Mao an 'Asian Hitler', and Mao calling Khrushchev a 'redundant old boot'. It was the last Congress attended by the PRC.</p>
1962	<p>16 October - The Cuban Missile Crisis begins as a 13-day confrontation between the USA and USSR over the placement of Soviet nuclear missiles on Cuba. The confrontation is often considered the closest the Cold War came to escalating into a full-scale nuclear war. The crisis began after U-2 spy planes spotted Soviet SS-4 and R-14 ballistic missiles on Cuba. The United States established a military blockade to prevent further missiles from reaching Cuba. It announced that they would not permit offensive weapons to be delivered to Cuba and demanded that the weapons already in Cuba be dismantled and returned to the USSR. After a long period of tense negotiations, an agreement was reached. Publicly, the Soviets would dismantle their offensive weapons in Cuba and return them to the Soviet Union, subject to United Nations verification, in exchange for a U.S. public declaration and agreement never to invade Cuba again without direct provocation. Secretly, the United States also agreed that it would dismantle all U.S.-built Jupiter MRBMs, which, unknown to the public, had been deployed in Turkey and Italy against the Soviet Union. After the crisis, the U.S. and the Soviet Union created the Moscow–Washington hotline, a direct communications link so that the two Cold War countries could communicate directly to solve such a crisis in future.</p> <p>20 October - The Sino-Indian War breaks out over a disputed Himalayan border, although tensions had been rising since the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and the granting of asylum to the Dalai Lama by India. The war ended on 20 November after China declared a unilateral ceasefire. The war worsened the Sino-Soviet Split</p>

	<p>as the USSR supported India, supplying MIG-fighters to the Indian government. Cuban Missile Crisis</p>
1963	<p>20 June - The Moscow-Washington Hotline is created in order to prevent miscommunication in the event of any future Cold War crisis. Although in popular culture known as the "red telephone", the hotline was never a telephone line, and no red phones were used. The first implementation used Teletype equipment, and shifted to fax machines in 1986. Since 2008, the Moscow–Washington hotline is a secure computer link over which messages are exchanged by email.</p> <p>5 August - The Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is signed between the US, UK and USSR in Moscow. It prohibited all test detonations of nuclear weapons except for those conducted underground. The Treaty was prompted after the Cuban Missile Crisis which brought tensions dangerous close to nuclear war.</p> <p>2 November - Ngo Dinh Diem, President of South Vietnam, is assassinated by military generals in a CIA-backed coup led by General Duong Van Minh. The coup was the culmination of nine years of autocratic and nepotistic family rule in South Vietnam. Discontent with the Diem regime had been simmering below the surface, and exploded with mass Buddhist protests against long-standing religious discrimination after the government shooting of protesters who defied a ban on the flying of the Buddhist flag. The coup weakened the government of South Vietnam, leading to infighting between ARVN Generals, requiring increasing US involvement in Vietnam to maintain stability.</p> <p>22 November - Lyndon Baines Johnson is sworn in as 36th US President after the assassination of President Kennedy. Johnson escalated America's involvement in the Vietnam War. In 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which granted Johnson the power to use military force in Southeast Asia without having to ask for an official declaration of war. The number of American military personnel in Vietnam increased dramatically, from 16,000 advisors in non-combat roles in 1963 to 550,000 in early 1968, many in combat roles. American casualties soared and the peace process bogged down. Growing unease with the war stimulated a large, angry anti war movement based especially on university campuses in the U.S. and abroad.</p>
1964	<p>10 August - The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution is passed by the US Congress in response to the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. The Resolution gave President Johnson the authorisation to escalate the use of military force in Vietnam without the need for a Congressional Resolution declaring war. The number of American military personnel in Vietnam subsequently increased dramatically, from 16,000 advisors in non-combat roles in 1963 to 550,000 in early 1968, many in combat roles.</p> <p>14 October - Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev becomes General Secretary of the CPSU, presiding over the USSR until his death in 1982. During his eighteen years as Leader of the USSR, Brezhnev's only major foreign policy innovation was détente. This did not differ much from the Khrushchev Thaw, a domestic and foreign policy relaxation started by Nikita Khrushchev. At the same time he presided over the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia to stop the Prague Spring, and he sent the Soviet military to Afghanistan in an attempt to save the fragile regime, which was fighting a war against the CIA-backed mujahideen. However, in December 1981 he decided not to militarily intervene in Poland, instead allowing the country's government to impose martial law, and effectively marking the end of the Brezhnev Doctrine.</p> <p>16 October - The First Chinese Nuclear bomb is tested at the Lop Nur nuclear test</p>

	<p>site, code-named 596. The development of the atomic bomb, helped by previous Soviet assistance, enabled Mao to pursue an increasingly independent foreign policy, lessening PRC dependence of the Soviet Union, further exacerbating the Sino-Soviet Split. By the end of the year, the USSR had broken diplomatic relations with China leading to international rivalry within World Communism.</p>
1965	<p>2 March - Operation Rolling Thunder begins in Vietnam. The bombing campaign, which ultimately lasted three years, was intended to force North Vietnam to cease its support for the Viet Cong by threatening to destroy North Vietnam's air defenses and industrial infrastructure. As well, it was aimed at bolstering the morale of the South Vietnamese. Lasting until November 1968, "Rolling Thunder" deluged the north with a million tons of missiles, rockets and bombs yet failed to reduce support for the Vietcong or destroy the North Vietnamese regime.</p> <p>8 March - 3,500 US Marines are deployed to Vietnam in the first escalation of American involvement, signalling a change from the previous policy of defensive support for the ARVN of South Vietnam, to an offensive and open-ended posture, led by General Westmoreland. By the end of 1965, over 200,000 marines had been deployed.</p>
1966	<p>16 May - The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution begins in Beijing with the May 16 Notification, purging the 'Peng-Luo-Lu-Yang anti-Party clique' and summarising Mao's justification for the Cultural Revolution before the Politburo. Mao then appointed the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG) to oversee his plans. The Cultural Revolution led to near-anarchy within China and escalated tensions between the USSR and PRC. With the Ninth Party Congress on 1 April 1969, the Cultural Revolution was declared over with the Central Cultural Revolution Group in de facto control of the country.</p>
1967	<p>6 May - The 1967 Leftist Riots breakout in Hong Kong as the Cultural Revolution encourages anti-imperialists protests. The events marked a dangerous escalation of the Cultural Revolution, with attack spreading to 30 other countries.</p> <p>5 June - The Six-Day War begins between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. On June 11, a ceasefire was signed. Arab casualties were far heavier than those of Israel: fewer than a thousand Israelis had been killed compared to over 20,000 from the Arab forces. Israel's military success was attributed to the element of surprise, an innovative and well-executed battle plan, and the poor quality and leadership of the Arab forces. Israel seized control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Israeli morale and international prestige was greatly increased by the outcome of the war and the area under Israeli control tripled, changing the balance of power in the Middle East towards the US-backed Israel.</p>
1968	<p>5 January - The Prague Spring period of political liberalisation begins in Czechoslovakia when reformist Alexander Dubček was elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSCĚ), and continued until 21 August 1968 when the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact invaded the country to halt the reforms. Attempting to introduce 'Socialism with a Human Face', the reforms were seen as a threat by the USSR.</p> <p>30 January - The Tet Offensive is launched by the Viet Cong and NVA in a nationwide campaign of surprise attacks against US and South Vietnamese forces. Although the offensive was a military defeat for North Vietnam, it had a profound</p>

	<p>effect on the US government and shocked the US public, which had been led to believe by its political and military leaders that the North Vietnamese were being defeated and incapable of launching such an ambitious military operation, whereupon the U.S. public support for the war declined and the U.S. sought negotiations to end the war, with peace talks beginning on 10 May in Paris.</p> <p>1 July - The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is signed which called on the five nuclear-weapon states (USA, USSR, UK, France, China) to share the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology, in return non-nuclear weapon states committed themselves to never acquiring nuclear weapons. The Treaty was a landmark disarmament agreement which prevented the spread of nuclear weapons, helping to maintain the stability of the nuclear balance of power. Only India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea are known to have developed nuclear weapons outside of the Treaty.</p> <p>13 November - The Brezhnev Doctrine is announced by Leonid Brezhnev. The doctrine was announced to retroactively justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 that ended the Prague Spring, along with earlier Soviet military interventions, such as the invasion of Hungary in 1956. These interventions were meant to put an end to liberalization efforts and uprisings that had the potential to compromise Soviet hegemony inside the Eastern Bloc, which was considered by the Soviets to be an essential defensive and strategic buffer in case hostilities with NATO were to break out.</p>
1969	<p>20 January - Richard Milhous Nixon becomes 37th President of the USA. Along with his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, Nixon became known for his realpolitik foreign policy that sought to engage with former adversaries like China, withdraw from Vietnam and begin a process of detente with the USSR. His plan for Vietnam, called the Nixon Doctrine, was to build up the ARVN, so that they could take over the defense of South Vietnam. The policy became known as "Vietnamization".</p> <p>2 March - The Sino-Soviet Border War commences along the Ussuri River on their disputed border. The incident heightened fears of nuclear war between the two former allies at a time of domestic upheaval in China, putting pressure on Mao to end the Cultural Revolution. The war caused Mao to re-appraise his foreign policy and seeking rapprochement with the US, leading to the so called Ping Pong Diplomacy of 1971.</p> <p>1 September - Muammar al-Gaddafi overthrows the Libyan monarchy and expels British and American personnel. Libya aligns itself with the Soviet Union.</p> <p>21 October - Willy Brandt is elected as Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, leading an SPD coalition government. As chancellor, Brandt developed his Neue Ostpolitik (<i>New Eastern Policy</i>) which sought detenté with the USSR. Brandt was active in creating a degree of rapprochement with East Germany, and also in improving relations with the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other Eastern Bloc countries. Ostpolitik led to the signing of the Moscow Treaty on 12 August 1970, Treaty of Warsaw on 7 December 1970, Berlin Agreement on 3 September 1971, and Basic Treaty on 21 December 1972. These agreements normalised relations between the FRG and GDR, leading to a relaxation of tensions in Europe and contributing to the wider pattern of detenté in the Cold War.</p> <p>17 November - SALT 1 (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) talks begin between the USA and USSR in Helsinki in an attempt to promote nuclear disarmament and detenté between the superpowers.</p>

1970	<p>12 August - The Treaty of Moscow is signed between the FRG and USSR. Led by Willy Brandt, the FRG dropped its claims for German reunification, renounced the use of force, recognising the existence of the GDR and the Oder-Neisse border line.</p> <p>24 October - Salvador Allende becomes President of Chile after being confirmed by the Chilean congress. Allende attempted to nationalise the economy with support of the USSR. On 11 September 1973, the military moved to oust Allende in a <i>coup d'état</i> sponsored by the CIA. Following Allende's death, General Augusto Pinochet ruled by a US-backed military junta that took over dissolved the Congress of Chile, suspended the Constitution, and began a persecution of alleged dissidents, in which thousands of Allende's supporters were kidnapped, tortured, and murdered.</p> <p>7 December - The Treaty of Warsaw is signed between the FRG and People's Republic of Poland. In the treaty, both sides committed themselves to nonviolence and accepted the existing border—the Oder-Neisse line.</p>
1971	<p>10 April - Ping Pong Diplomacy commences between the PRC and US as the US Table Tennis Team is invited to play in China in a diplomatic gesture designed to improve Sino-US relations. The diplomacy was successful, resulting in the lifting of the trade embargo against China on 10 June, and leading to Kissinger's secret trip to China to meet with Zhou Enlai in July. Both sides had reasons to improve relations, with China hoping for US support to deter Soviet aggression, and the US hoping to pressurise the USSR into detente by improving relations with China. On 15 July President Richard Nixon revealed Nixon's secret visit to the world and that he had accepted an invitation to visit the PRC.</p> <p>3 September - The Berlin Agreement is signed between the four wartime allied powers. It reestablished ties between the two parts of Berlin, improved travel and communications between the two parts of the city and brought numerous improvements for the residents of the Western Sectors, laying the foundation for a series of East-West agreements which ushered in the period usually known as Détente.</p> <p>13 September - Lin Biao dies in a mysterious plane crash after being implicated in a plot to assassinate Mao and defect to the USSR. Mao's health rapidly deteriorated after the incident, reappointing Zhou Enlai as the second most powerful man in China ahead of the Gang of Four.</p> <p>25 October - The PRC replaces Taiwan at the United Nations as 'the only legitimate representative of China'. General Assembly Resolution 2758 was passed after the US stopped actively opposing the proposal in order to facilitate its rapprochement with the PRC.</p>
1972	<p>21 February - Nixon's visit to China commences with Nixon visiting Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai. The visit started with a personal meeting between Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon. The trip culminated on 28 February with the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué which pledged both nations to the normalisation of relations (which wouldn't occur until 1979), and agreed that neither they nor any other power should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region. In the Communiqué, the US also acknowledged the One-China Policy concerning the political status of Taiwan, but did not endorse the PRC's version of the policy.</p> <p>22 May - The Moscow Summit is held between Richard Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev. Along with other agreements, It featured the signing of the Strategic</p>

	<p>Arms Limitation Talks Agreement (SALT) and Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, marking the high-point of detenté cooperation between the USA and USSR.</p> <p>Anwar Sadat expels soviets from Egypt</p> <p>29 September - The Japan-China Joint Communiqué normalises relations with China, severing Japan's relations with Taiwan and paving the way for growing trade between the two former enemies.</p> <p>21 December - The Basic Treaty is signed between the GDR and FRG, with both states formally recognising each other as sovereign states, marking an abandonment of West Germany's Hallstein Doctrine in favor of Ostpolitik. The signing of the treaty paved the way for the two German states to be recognised by the international community, leading to both German nations joining the United Nations on 18 September 1973.</p>
1973	<p>27 January - The Paris Peace Accords are signed between the US, Republic of Vietnam and Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It ended direct U.S. military combat, and temporarily stopped the fighting between North and South Vietnam. Despite the agreement, North Vietnamese military forces gradually built up their military infrastructure in the areas they controlled, and two years later were in position to launch the successful offensive that ended South Vietnam's status as an independent country, with Saigon falling on 30 April 1975.</p> <p>11 September - General Pinochet takes power in Chile in a CIA-sponsored coup d'état, ending Soviet influence in Chile.</p> <p>6 October - The Yom Kippur War begins between Israel, Egypt and Syria. The war began when the Arab coalition launched a joint surprise attack on Israeli positions in the Israeli-occupied territories on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism. Egyptian and Syrian forces crossed ceasefire lines to enter the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights respectively. Both the United States and the Soviet Union initiated massive resupply efforts to their respective allies during the war, and this led to a near-confrontation between the two nuclear superpowers. In the ensuing military victory, Israel initiated talks with Egypt, culminating in the 1978 Camp David Accords the first peaceful recognition of Israel by an Arab country. Egypt continued its drift away from the Soviet Union and left the Soviet sphere of influence entirely.</p>
1974	<p>25 April - The Carnation Revolution takes place in Portugal, overthrowing the authoritarian regime of Estado Novo and introducing a democratic system. The revolution led to the withdrawal of Portuguese troops from its overseas colonies, leading to protracted civil wars in Angola and Mozambique which would draw in the superpowers in a competition for influence over these newly independent nations.</p> <p>9 August - Gerald Ford becomes 38th President of the USA following the resignation of Richard Nixon after the Watergate Scandal. Serving until 20 January 1977, Ford continued many of Nixon's detenté policies with the USSR and China, presiding over the US signing of the Helsinki Accords on 1 August 1975.</p>
1975	<p>3 January - The Jackson-Vanik Amendment is added into the 1972 Trade Reform Act, restricting the President's ability to grant 'most favoured nation' status to the USSR and other Soviet bloc countries if those nations restricted the freedom of emigration and other human rights. The Amendment marked the first of many moves within the USA against the policy of detenté, with many Senators and Representatives opposing the perceived 'appeasement' of the USSR.</p>

	<p>18 April - The Communist Khmer Rouge takes Power in Cambodia after the capture of Phnom Penh and victory in the Cambodian Civil War. The government of Democratic Kampuchea was installed, led by Pol Pot, whose regime was responsible for the deaths of millions of Cambodians through forced labour and genocide due to its Maoist social engineering projects. Vietnam would later invade Cambodia in 1978 and remove the Khmer Rouge from power, precipitating China's failed invasion of Vietnam in 1979 in support of the Khmer Rouge.</p> <p>30 April - The creation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is declared after Saigon is captured by NVA forces, reuniting the country and ending the Vietnam War.</p> <p>15 July - The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project commences as the first joint US-Soviet space flight. The project was a symbol of the policy of détente that the two superpowers were pursuing at the time. It involved the docking of an Apollo Command/Service Module with the Soviet Soyuz 19. The mission ceremoniously marked the end of the Space Race that had begun in 1957 with the Sputnik launch.</p> <p>1 August - The Helsinki Accords is signed between 35 states as the final act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The Accords were a general declaration by European States including the US and USSR which paved the way for a relaxation in tensions and marked the high-water mark of detenté. Grouped under three 'baskets', the Final Act called for all sides to respect the territorial integrity of European nations, improve economic and scientific cooperation, and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Initially unpopular in the West as the Accords were an acceptance of the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, the third basket on human rights would be increasingly used by human rights groups within the Soviet bloc to call for greater change and respect for individual rights, contributing to the decline of Soviet control in the 1980s.</p> <p>11 November - The Angolan Civil War breaks out between former liberation struggle allies the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The war would last over 26 years and draw in superpower involvement, becoming a proxy struggle during the Cold War between the USA, USSR, Cuba, and South Africa. The conflict put pressure on detenté as the both superpowers covertly supported either side in the conflict.</p>
1976	<p>9 September - Mao Zedong dies after a series of heart attacks and is replaced by Huo Guofeng, becoming Chairman of the CCP Central Committee and Chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, holding all three of the most powerful party and state positions.</p>
1977	<p>6 January - Charter 77 is published in Czechoslovakia by a loose group of intellectuals and dissidents who criticised the government for failing to implement human rights provisions of agreements it had signed including the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and 1960 Constitution. The communist government immediately outlawed publication of the Charter, and many of its signatories were arrested and imprisoned including Václav Havel, Ludvík Vaculík and Pavel Landovský. Charter 77 would later influence demonstrations against communism in the Velvet Revolution of 1989.</p> <p>20 January - James Earl 'Jimmy' Carter Jr becomes 39th President of the USA and would serve until 1981. Despite working for Middle Eastern peace with the</p>

	<p>1978 Camp David Accords and hoping to continue detenté with the USSR with the signing of the SALT II treaty in 1979, Carter presided over renewed tensions and the collapse of detenté after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The unexpected invasion forced the US to change its policies, with the Carter Doctrine committing the US to using military force to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf, the refusal of the US to ratify the SALT II treaty, increasing financing of the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan and the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Carter would later lose the 1980 election to Ronald Reagan, Carter being damaged by the 1979 Iranian Revolution and ensuing hostage crisis.</p> <p>30 May - The Mozambican Civil War breaks out in the newly independent former Portuguese colony, as South African supported rebels fight against the socialist-leaning government. The conflict was exacerbated by covert superpower support and financing, becoming another proxy conflict in Africa and putting further pressure on detenté.</p>
1978	<p>17 September - The Camp David Accords are signed between Egypt and Israel following negotiations chaired by President Carter in the US. The Accords normalised relations between Egypt and Israel, the first Arab state to do so. As a consequence, President Sadat was assassinated in 1981 by extremists.</p> <p>18 December - Deng Xiaoping emerges as 'paramount leader' of China at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CCP. Deng pursued economic liberalisation, introducing market reforms into China whilst maintaining China's independence from the USSR.</p>
1979	<p>1 January - The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations comes into effect, normalising relations between the US and China. Beyond formal recognition, the communiqué reaffirms the principles agreed upon in the Shanghai Communiqué, released almost seven years earlier.</p> <p>17 February - The Sino-Vietnamese War begins as China launches a limited war against Vietnam in response to Vietnam's invasion of China-backed Cambodia. Although unable to deter Vietnam from Cambodia, China was able to demonstrate that its Cold War communist adversary, the Soviet Union, was unable to protect its Vietnamese ally.</p> <p>2 June - Pope John Paul II begins his first pastoral visit to Poland, which renewed anti-communist protests and sparked the creation of the Solidarity trade union movement.</p> <p>18 June - The SALT II Treaty is signed in Vienna by Carter and Brezhnev. The Treaty extended arms reductions started by SALT I, banning new missile programs and calling for real reductions. SALT II was never ratified by the US Senate due to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which ended detente. New President Reagan also criticised SALT II upon taking office, suggesting that it enabled the USSR to obtain strategic advantage over the US.</p> <p>24 December - The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan begins as Soviet forces arrive in Kabul, deposing President Amin and installing Babrak Karmal. In response, Mujahideen insurgent groups are created to oppose the Soviet occupation. Increasingly funded by the US and Arab States via Pakistan, the Mujahideen fought a protracted guerilla war against the USSR, inflicting over 60,000 casualties on Soviet forces, leading to their eventual withdrawal in 1989. The war became known as the Soviet Union's 'Vietnam' and led to the immediate collapse of detenté. It also put huge economic and political strain on the USSR, contributing to its eventual collapse in the 1980s.</p>

1980	<p>20 January - The US issues an ultimatum to the USSR announcing a boycott of the Moscow Olympics unless they withdrew from Afghanistan.</p> <p>17 September - Solidarity is created in Poland, the first non-communist trade union under the leadership of Lech Walesa. Starting in Gdansk, Solidarity became a national organisation and social movement, associated with the Catholic Church. It advocated non-violent protest and called for reform to communism. Solidarity was eventually outlawed during the imposition of martial law on 13 December 1981 by General Jaruzelski, and Lech Walesa was arrested. Yet Solidarity grew with clandestine support from the US and Catholic Church, initiating a wave of mass strikes in 1988 and 1989 that led to Round Table Talks that ended the communist monopoly on power and the winning by Solidarity candidates of 99% of the vote in the June 1989 elections, ending Communism in Poland.</p>
1981	<p>20 January - Ronald Wilson Reagan becomes the 40th President of the USA. Reagan would serve until 1989, winning reelection in 1984. Publicly describing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire", President Reagan challenged Gorbachev to "tear down this wall!". He transitioned Cold War policy from détente to rollback, by escalating an arms race with the USSR by initiating the Strategic Defence Initiative, and increasing support for anti-communist resistance movements in the Reagan Doctrine. After 1985, he also pursued engagement with the Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, which culminated in the INF Treaty, shrinking both countries' nuclear arsenals.</p> <p>13 December - Martial Law is declared in Poland in an attempt by the government to crush political opposition. Thousands of opposition activists were jailed without charge and as many as 91 killed. Although martial law was lifted in 1983, many of the political prisoners were not released until a general amnesty in 1986.</p>
1982	<p>12 November - Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov becomes General Secretary of the CPSU after the death of Leonid Brezhnev. Andropov initiated economic reforms and anti-corruption drives domestically, whilst presiding over increasing tensions with the US internationally.</p>
1983	<p>23 March - The Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) is unveiled by President Reagan. SDI was a proposed missile defense system intended to protect the United States from attack by ballistic strategic nuclear weapons. The ambitious initiative was criticized for allegedly threatening to destabilize the MAD-approach and to possibly re-ignite "an offensive arms race", yet it was credited by some as placing additional military and economic pressure on the USSR, significantly contributing to the decline of Soviet power and its eventual collapse.</p> <p>1 September - Korean Air Lines Flight 007 is shot down by a Soviet SU-15 Interceptor over the Sea of Japan. The incident was one of the most tense moments of the Cold War and resulted in an escalation of anti-Soviet sentiment, particularly in the United States. The Soviet Union initially denied knowledge of the incident, but later admitted shooting down the aircraft, claiming that it was on a MASINT spy mission. The shock of the crisis enabled Reagan to surmount international opposition to his deployment of Pershing II ballistic missiles to West Germany, increasing further tensions between the superpowers.</p> <p>25 October - U.S. forces invade the Caribbean island of Grenada in an attempt to overthrow the Marxist military government, expel Cuban troops, and abort the construction of a Soviet-funded airstrip.</p>

	<p>2 November - The Able Archer Crisis occurs Exercise as Soviet anti-aircraft misinterpret a test of NATO's nuclear warfare procedures as a fake cover for an actual NATO attack; in response, Soviet nuclear forces are put on high alert. Some historians have since argued that Able Archer 83 was one of the times when the world has come closest to nuclear war since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962</p>
1984	<p>13 February - Konstantin Chernenko becomes General Secretary of the CPSU after the death of Andropov. Serving just 13 months in office until his death, Chernenko did little to prevent the escalation of the Cold War with the United States, continuing many of Brezhnev's policies.</p>
1985	<p>11 March - Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of the CPSU after the death of Konstantin Chernenko. Serving until 1991, Gorbachev's policies of glasnost ("openness") and perestroika ("restructuring") and his reorientation of Soviet strategic aims contributed to the end of the Cold War. Under this program, the role of the Communist Party in governing the state was removed from the constitution, which inadvertently led to crisis-level political instability with a surge of regional nationalist and anti-communist activism culminating in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.</p> <p>19 November - The Geneva Summit begins between US President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev. The two leaders discussed SDI and nuclear disarmament as well as general diplomatic relations. Whilst both sides achieved little in regards to changes, Gorbachev accepted Reagan's invitation to the United States in a year, and Reagan was invited to do the same in 1987.</p>
1986	<p>26 April - The Chernobyl Disaster occurs in the Ukraine, becoming the most disastrous nuclear power plant accident in history. Occurring during the time of disarmament talks between the US and USSR, Chernobyl served to remind world leaders of the dangers of nuclear technology, encouraging further talks on disarmament.</p> <p>11 October - The Reykjavik Summit is held between US President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Iceland. Despite getting unexpectedly close to the potential elimination of all nuclear weapons, the meeting adjourned with no agreement; however, both sides discovered the extent of the concessions the other side was willing to make. Participants and observers have referred to the summit as an enormous breakthrough which eventually facilitated the INF Treaty, signed at the Washington Summit on 8 December 1987.</p>
1987	<p>27 January - Perestroika is formally introduced by Gorbachev to encourage economic restructuring within the USSR. The 1987 Law on State Enterprises deregulated control over state businesses, allowing market demand to regulate production. This was combined with the 1988 Law on Cooperatives that allowed private ownership of businesses. The goal of the perestroika, however, was not to end the command economy but rather to make socialism work more efficiently to better meet the needs of Soviet citizens. Yet the process of implementing perestroika arguably exacerbated already existing political, social, and economic tensions within the Soviet Union and no doubt helped to further nationalism in the constituent republics.</p> <p>8 December - The Washington Summit is held between US President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in the US. Reagan and Gorbachev discussed regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Central America, and Southern Africa, arms</p>

	<p>control issues for chemical weapons as well as conventional weapons, the status of START negotiations, and human rights. A notable accomplishment of the Washington Summit was the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.</p>
1988	<p>15 May - The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan begins. The total withdrawal of all Soviet soldiers from Afghanistan was completed on 15 February 1989, in compliance with the terms of the Geneva Accords signed 10 months earlier.</p> <p>29 May - The Moscow Summit is held between US President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in the USSR. Reagan and Gorbachev finalized the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) after the U.S. Senate's ratification of the treaty in May 1988. Reagan and Gorbachev continued to discuss bilateral issues like Central America, Southern Africa, the Middle East and the pending withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Reagan and Gorbachev continued their discussions on human rights. When asked if he still believes that the Soviet Union is still an evil empire, Reagan replies he was talking about "another time, another era."</p> <p>7 December - Gorbachev announces in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly that the Soviet Union will no longer militarily interfere with Eastern Europe, ending the Brezhnev Doctrine and allowing the rise of popular upheavals in Eastern Europe throughout 1989, in which Communism was overthrown.</p>
1989	<p>20 January - George Herbert Walker Bush becomes 41st President of the US. Serving until 1993, Bush continued negotiations with Gorbachev to end the Cold War, culminating in the Malta Summit of December 1989 in which both leaders declared the Cold War to be over.</p> <p>2 May - Hungary begins to dismantle its 240km border fence with Austria, leading to a rapid increase in illegal immigration. The relatively open border with the West allowed hundreds of East Germans on holiday in Hungary to escape to Austria and then travel safely to West Germany. By the end of September 1989, more than 30,000 East Germans had escaped to the West before the GDR denied travel to Hungary, leaving the CSSR (Czechoslovakia) as the only neighboring state where East Germans could escape to. The GDR closed the border to the CSSR on 3 October, thereby isolating itself from all neighbors. Having been shut off from their last chance for escape, an increasing number of East Germans participated in the Monday demonstrations in Leipzig on 4, 11, and 18 September, each attracting 1,200 to 1,500 demonstrators; many were arrested and beaten. However, the people refused to be intimidated. On 25 September, the protests attracted 8,000 demonstrators.</p> <p>4 June - Elections in Poland lead to the Solidarity trade union winning all available seats in the Parliament and 99% in the Senate, ending communist rule in Poland. Although the elections were not entirely democratic, they paved the way for creation of Mazowiecki's cabinet and a peaceful transition to democracy, which was confirmed after the presidential election of 1990 (in which Lech Wałęsa replaced Jaruzelski as president) and the parliamentary elections of 1991.</p> <p>6 October - Gorbachev visits the GDR, and urged the East German leadership to accept reform in the face of mass protests on the streets, culminating in the Alexanderplatz Demonstrations of over half a million people on 4 November.</p> <p>23 October - The Republic of Hungary is declared in Budapest, after the successful negotiations with the communists to transfer power in multi-party elections.</p>

	<p>9 November - The Berlin Wall falls after Günter Schabowski, the party boss in East Berlin and the spokesman for the SED Politburo, announces an easing of travel restrictions to West Germany. In the confusion, crowds descended on border crossings, with guards unable to prevent people from crossing. This was followed by the dissolution of the SED on 16 December, free elections on 18 March 1990 and reunification on 3 October 1990.</p> <p>19 November - The Velvet Revolution begins in Czechoslovakia as student protests grow into a nationwide protest movement, leading to the resignation of the entire communist leadership on 24 November. Alexander Dubcek was elected speaker of the parliament on 28 December and Václav Havel the President of Czechoslovakia on 29 December 1989</p> <p>2 December - The Malta Summit is held between President Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev. During the summit, Bush and Gorbachev would declare an official end to the Cold War although whether it was truly such is a matter of debate.</p> <p>11 December - The Bulgarian Communist Party announces that it would abandon its monopoly on power, leading to a transition to democracy in 1990.</p> <p>22 December - The Romanian Revolution occurs as the military turns on the government of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, leading to his summary execution on Christmas Day. Democratic elections were then held in 1990.</p>
1990	<p>3 October - Germany is official reunified as the GDR is dissolved and merged into the Federal Republic of Germany.</p>
1991	<p>25 February - The Warsaw Pact is declared disbanded at a meeting of defence and foreign ministers from remaining Pact countries meeting in Hungary.</p> <p>12 June - Boris Yeltsin is elected as president of Russia. Upon the resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev and the final dissolution of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991, after which the RSFSR became the sovereign state of the Russian Federation, Yeltsin remained in office as president.</p> <p>31 July - START 1 is signed between the US and USSR for the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. The treaty barred its signatories from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads atop a total of 1,600 inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and bombers. START negotiated the largest and most complex arms control treaty in history, and its final implementation in late 2001 resulted in the removal of about 80 percent of all strategic nuclear weapons then in existence.</p> <p>19 August - The Soviet coup attempt of 1991 occurs in response to a new union treaty to be signed on August 20. The coup leaders were hard-line members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) who were opposed to Gorbachev's reform program and the new union treaty that he had negotiated which decentralised much of the central government's power to the republics. They were opposed, mainly in Moscow, by a short but effective campaign of civil resistance. Although the coup collapsed in only two days and Gorbachev returned to government, the event destabilised the Soviet Union and is widely considered to have contributed to both the demise of the CPSU and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.</p> <p>25 December - US President George H. W. Bush, after receiving a phone call from Boris Yeltsin, delivers a Christmas Day speech acknowledging the end of the Cold War. Mikhail Gorbachev resigns as President of the USSR. The hammer and sickle is lowered for the last time over the Kremlin.</p>

<p>26 December - The Council of Republics of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR recognizes the dissolution of the Soviet Union and decides to dissolve itself. The declaration acknowledged the independence of the former Soviet republics and created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).</p>
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